

United States Department of Agriculture  
Agricultural Research Service

CHARTER

**Information Technology Investment Review Board**

July 1998

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this charter is to define the authority, membership, roles, and responsibilities of the Information Technology Investment Review Board (ITIRB) and its relationship to other internal and external bodies.

II. BACKGROUND

The Department of Agriculture has established an Executive Information Technology Investment Review Board that administers a capital planning and investment control process for making technology, budget, financial, and program management decisions. As part of this process, each Agency within the Department of Agriculture has been directed to establish a board with similar functions.

III. MEMBERSHIP

The ITIRB consists of senior managers from the Agricultural Research Service (ARS): Associate Administrator (Chair); Deputy Administrator, National Program Staff; Deputy Administrator, Administrative and Financial Management; Budget Officer, Budget and Program Management Staff; Director, National Agricultural Library; one Area Director selected by the Administrator; and the Chief Information Officer (nonvoting Executive Secretary).

IV. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The ITIRB will approve new information technology investments and evaluate existing projects and operational systems to create an ARS Information Technology investment portfolio that best supports the Agency mission and program delivery processes.

Specific investments reviewed by the Board will include Mission Critical Systems, which is a system supporting a core business activity or process, systems requiring a capital investment greater than \$15 million, and HPRL (High Priority Requirements Lists) requests to Headquarters involving information technology investments greater than \$1 million. IT proposals reviewed by the Board will be processed through routine management channels.

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The Board will use a standard set of criteria developed by USDA and described in “Guide To Implementing IT Capital Planning and Investment Control.” The criteria will include a consideration of Department and Agency wide impact, visibility, cost, risk, architecture, and standards.

In the scope of the ITIRB, information technology investment encompasses all investments involving information technology and information resources, including equipment, IRM services, information or application system design, development and maintenance, regardless of whether such work is performed by government employees or contracted out.

V. PROCESS. The Boards actions will be governed by the USDA “Guide to Implementing IT Capital Planning and Investment Control.” This process applies the Government and Accounting Office’s best practices approach which involves three phases of “select”, “control”, and “evaluate” for effective information technology management.

SELECT. This phase involves screening new proposals and self assessments of ongoing investments. Screening and numeral scoring are based on criteria related to the major areas of Mission, Risk, and Cost/Benefit. Using scoring results as the primary guide, investments are selected. The I-TIPS (Information Technology Investment Portfolio System) Investment Manager, an automated software tool, is used to facilitate the development of documentation needed to describe the prospective investment and to numerical score according to specific criteria contained in the software.

CONTROL. During this phase, the progress of the investment is monitored according to performance criteria and direct corrective action is taken to ensure that milestones, performance requirements, and adherence to budget and schedule are being met. Successes and shortfalls will be identified and used to ensure continuous process improvement.

EVALUATION. A post implementation review identifies lessons learned, which are documented and applied in future investments. A major focus will be on how well the investment met its mission performance, budget, and schedule goals.

## VI. MEETINGS

The ITIRB will meet quarterly in conjunction with meetings of the Administrator’s Council to conduct ITIRB business or more often if the review of a specific proposal is requested.

The Executive Secretary will prepare an agenda for all meetings, prepare and distribute minutes for all meetings, and perform other scheduling, correspondence, and communication functions for the ITIRB. An agenda and notice of meeting will be provide to ITIRB members by the Executive Secretary 10 working days before the meeting.

The Executive Secretary will record and distribute minutes of each meeting and will distribute draft minutes within 5 working days of each meeting to Board members. Comments will be due 5 working days after the receipt of the draft for incorporation in the final minutes. Final minutes will be distributed with the agenda for the next meeting.

## VII. VOTING

The ITIRB will make decisions, including revisions to this charter, by voting. In order for a vote to occur, a quorum must be present. A quorum is two thirds of the voting members in person, by telephone, by video conference, or by proxy. Each member will have one vote.